

DPH Partnering with State Parks and YMCA to Remind Delawareans to ‘Protect Your Skin’



Billboard promoting
ProtectYourSkinDE campaign

DOVER – The days are heating up as we approach the official start of summer. While most people are focused on getting outdoors to be more active, enjoy sports like baseball and fishing, and appreciate the warmth, the Division of Public Health (DPH) is reminding everyone to be mindful of the sun’s harmful rays. Overexposure to the sun’s ultraviolet (UVA and UVB) rays can lead to skin cancer. Delaware ranks third nationally for skin cancer diagnosis. Building on ongoing awareness efforts, the 2017 Division of Public Health’s #ProtectYourSkinDE skin cancer prevention campaign is under way to educate Delawareans, especially children, teens and young adults about skin cancer prevention.

“Skin cancer is absolutely preventable and being sun smart can dramatically reduce the risk of developing it later on,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “By building new partnerships we hope to reach even more people through this campaign and give them the tools and support to help prevent them, along with their loved ones, from becoming victims of this life-threatening disease.”

DPH is teaming up with Delaware State Parks and the YMCA of Delaware this year to spread the word about skin cancer

prevention. Educational signs and materials will be distributed throughout state parks to help remind visitors to use sunscreen and practice other healthy behaviors. The Division of Public Health (DPH) Comprehensive Cancer Control Program has partnered with the YMCA of Delaware to incorporate the evidence-based “Pool Cool” program into the YMCA swim lessons and swim team practices. YMCA instructors and Coaches will provide 40 minutes of skin cancer prevention education to children ages 3 to 19. The 2017 prevention campaign will also include events throughout the summer in an effort to connect people with resources for prevention and early detection.

DPH is sharing the following information and tips so everyone can “Protect Your Skin”:

Everyone is at risk for skin cancer. Protection from damaging and dangerous ultraviolet (UVA and UVB) radiation is important year-round. Ultraviolet radiation from the sun as well as indoor tanning, damages the epidermis, the skin’s top layer. Long-term sun exposure, sunbathing, using indoor tanning, or having sunburns increases your chance of developing skin cancer, the most common form of cancer in the United States. Sun exposure also causes premature aging, wrinkles, age spots, and uneven skin tone. Protecting your skin is easy if you do these simple things:

- Apply sunscreen to your entire body 30 minutes before going outside.
- Use a water-resistant sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection and a broad-spectrum SPF 15+.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours or immediately after swimming or excessive sweating.
- Seek shade, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Wear wide-brimmed hats to cover your head, face, neck and ears.
- Protect your eyes with sunglasses that block 99% or more of UV light.

Damaging rays can cause skin cancer and melanoma that can threaten your life. Facts:

- The sun's rays reach you on cloudy or hazy days and reflect off of water and sand.
- People with light complexions are more likely to sunburn and should use a broad-spectrum SPF 15+.
- If you have a family history of skin cancer, you're more likely to develop it, so be sure to get checked. Also at greater risk are those with freckles, blonde or red hair, or blue or green eyes or those with skin that reddens or sunburns easily.
- If you work or play outdoors, you can reduce your risk for skin cancer by wearing SPF 15+ sunscreen.
- Tanning beds, booths and sunlamps have been linked to skin cancers including melanoma, therefore, if you have a history of indoor tanning, you're more prone to skin cancer and should see a dermatologist.

Examine your skin. Check all exposed and unexposed parts of your body. A change in a mole, a new growth, or even an unhealed sore can be a sign of skin cancer.

Remember: Not all skin cancers look the same, and may not fit the rules described above. It's important to tell your health care provider about any changes or new spots on the skin, or growths that look different from the rest of your moles. That's why it's important to self-examine your skin, know what to look for and to see a dermatologist if you identify an irregularity.

DPH also encourages everyone to check out the [ProtectYourSkinDE.com](https://www.protectyourskonde.com) website. This comprehensive site offers everything from facts and figures, to tips for people who work outdoors. The site enables visitors to find a dermatologist, and it also offers video testimonials from skin cancer survivors who explain why skin cancer prevention is so important.

The #ProtectYourSkinDE campaign runs from May through September. For more information on prevention and your risk for skin cancer, contact the DPH Comprehensive Cancer Control Program at 302-744-1020, or visit ProtectYourSkinDE.com or HealthyDelaware.org.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.

